

**Catastrophize** - You use dramatic exaggerated expressions to depict that the relationship is in danger or that it has failed.

**Numbing out** - You become devoid of emotions, or you have no regard for others' needs or troubles.

**Humor** - You use humor as a way of not dealing with the issue at hand.

**Sarcasm** - You use negative humor, hurtful words, belittling comments, cutting remarks or demeaning statements.

**Minimization** - You assert that the other person is overreacting to an issue; you intentionally underestimate, downplay, or soft-pedal the issue.

**Rationalization** - You attempt to make your actions seem reasonable; you try to attribute your behavior to credible motives; you try to provide believable but untrue reasons for your conduct.

**Indifference** - You are cold and show no concern.

**Abdication** - You give away responsibilities.

**Self-abandonment** - You run yourself down; you neglect yourself.

**Other** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 5. LOOK AT THE ITEMS YOU STARRED IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION 3.

List the three or four main feelings. These are your core fears.

Core fear #1

\_\_\_\_\_

Core fear #2

\_\_\_\_\_

Core fear #3

\_\_\_\_\_

### 6. LOOK AT THE ITEMS YOU STARRED IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION 4.

List your three or four main reactions when someone pushes your core fear button.

Reaction #1

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Reaction #2

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Reaction #3

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# CORE FEARS

## IDENTIFY YOUR CORE FEAR

(Appendix B from the book 'The DNA of Relationships', by Dr. Gary Smalley)

### 1. IDENTIFY THE CONFLICT:

Identify a recent conflict, argument, or negative situation with your spouse, friend, child, neighbor, coworker, etc.—something that really “pushed your buttons”, or upset you. Think about how you were feeling and how you wished the person would not say or do the things that upset you.

### 2. IDENTIFY YOUR FEELINGS:

How did this conflict or situation make you feel? Check all that apply, but star the most important feelings:

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure      | <input type="checkbox"/> Uncomfortable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frightened  | <input type="checkbox"/> Apathetic     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Confused    | <input type="checkbox"/> Anxious       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Puzzled     | <input type="checkbox"/> Worried       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Horrified   | <input type="checkbox"/> Upset         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disgusted   | <input type="checkbox"/> Disturbe      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sullen      | <input type="checkbox"/> Resentful     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Furious     | <input type="checkbox"/> Sad           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bitter      | <input type="checkbox"/> Hurt          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fed up      | <input type="checkbox"/> Disappointed  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frustrated  | <input type="checkbox"/> Wearied       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Miserable   | <input type="checkbox"/> Torn up       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guilty      | <input type="checkbox"/> Shamed        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Embarrassed | <input type="checkbox"/> Other         |

### 3. IDENTIFY YOUR FEARS:

How did this conflict make you feel about yourself? What did the conflict “say” about you and your feelings? Check all that apply, but star the most important feelings (*next page*).

# CORE FEARS

**Rejected** - The other person doesn't want me or need me. I am not necessary in this relationship; I feel unwanted.

**Abandoned** - The other person will ultimately leave me; I will be left alone to care for myself, the other person won't be committed to me for life.

**Disconnected** - We will become emotionally detached or separated; I will feel cut off from the other person.

**Like a failure** - I am not successful at being a husband/wife, friend, parent, coworker; I will not perform correctly; I will not live up to expectations, I am not good enough.

**Helpless** - I cannot do anything to change the other person or my situation; I do not possess the power, resources, capacity, or ability to get what I want; I will feel controlled by the other person.

**Defective** - Something is wrong with me; I am the problem.

**Inadequate** - I am not capable; I am incompetent.

**Inferior** - Everyone else is better than I am; I am less valuable or important than others.

**Invalidated** - Who I am, what I think, what I do, or how I feel is not valued.

**Unloved** - The other person doesn't care about me; my relationship lacks warm attachment, admiration, enthusiasm, or devotion.

**Cheated** - The other person will take advantage of me or will withhold something I need; I won't get what I want.

**Worthless** - I am useless; I have no value to the other person.

**Unaccepted** - I am never able to meet the other person's expectations; I am not good enough.

**Judged** - I am always being unfairly judged; the other person forms faulty or negative opinions about me; I am always being evaluated; the other person does not approve of me.

**Humiliated** - The relationship is extremely destructive to my self-respect or dignity.

**Ignored** - The other person will not pay attention to me; I feel neglected.

**Insignificant** - I am irrelevant in the relationship; the other person does not see me as an important part of our relationship.

**Other** \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4. IDENTIFY YOUR REACTIONS:

What do you do when you feel \_\_\_\_\_?  
(Insert the most important feeling from question # 3)

How do you react when you feel that way?  
Identify your common verbal or physical reactions to deal with that feeling. Check all that apply, but star the most important reactions.

**Withdrawal** - You avoid others or alienate yourself without resolution; you sulk or use the silent treatment.

**Escalation** - Emotions spiral out of control; you argue, raise your voice, fly into a rage.

**Try harder** - you try to do more to earn others' love and care.

**Negative beliefs** - you believe the other person is far worse than is really the case; you see the other person in a negative light or attribute negative motives to him or her.

**Blaming** - you place responsibility on others, not accepting fault; you're convinced the problem is the other person's fault.

**Exaggeration** - You make overstatements or enlarge your words beyond bound or the truth.

**Tantrums** - You have fits of bad temper.

**Denial** - You refuse to admit the truth or reality.

**Invalidation** - You devalue the other person; you do not appreciate what he or she feels or thinks or does.

**Defensiveness** - Instead of listening, you defend yourself by providing an explanation.

**Clinginess** - You develop a strong emotional attachment or dependence on the other person.

**Passive-aggressive** - You display negative emotions, resentment and aggression in passive ways, such as procrastination and stubbornness.

**Caretaking** - You become responsible for the other person by giving physical or emotional care and support to the point you are doing everything for the other person, who does nothing to care for himself or herself.

**Acting Out** - You engage in negative behaviors, such as drug or alcohol abuse, extramarital affairs, excessive shopping or spending or over eating.

**Fix-it mode** - You focus almost exclusively on what is needed to solve the problem.

**Complaining** - You express unhappiness or make accusations, you criticize, creating a list of the other person's faults

**Aggression or abuse** - You become verbally or physically aggressive, possibly abusive.

**Manipulation** - You control the other person for your own advantage, you try to get him or her to do what you want.

**Anger and rage** - You display strong feelings of displeasure or violent and uncontrolled emotions.